

Purpose

Today, a blood policy or guideline exists in the majority of sports due to a number of blood borne infectious diseases which can be transmitted; the most serious of these include Hepatitis and HIV.

The potential for the spread of infection when contact is made has been widely recognised for many years. Because of heightened public awareness and anxieties, increasing attention has been given to the possible risks of acquiring a blood borne disease where spillage of blood may occur.

These guidelines have been put in place to protect injured athletes, their competitors, officials and volunteers.

Spill Kit

It is recommended that Little Athletics NSW and all affiliated centres have a spill kit to be used only for the purpose of dealing with blood spills.

The suggested contents of a spill kit include:

- 1 x packet of paper hand towels
- 1 x packet of disposable latex surgical gloves
- 1 x packet of medium size re-sealable plastic bags.
- 1 x 1500ml spray bottle with 10% bleach and 2% detergent mixed with water (with bleach being the key ingredient).

Responsibility & Guidelines

Athletes

1. It is the responsibility of all athletes to maintain strict personal hygiene by covering any cuts or abrasions with an impermeable waterproof dressing.
2. Open cuts and abrasions occurring during an athletic event or athletic training must be reported and treated immediately.
3. Athletes should avoid unnecessary contact with the blood of other athletes.
4. Any athlete with an infectious disease should discuss the potential hazards of participation with a doctor and must notify the centre of the fact that they are suffering from an infectious disease. Chronic carriers of a blood borne disease should also seek medical clearance and advice and must also notify the centre.
5. An athlete who has an open or bleeding wound (including bloodied nose), must leave the event at which they are competing until the bleeding is controlled and the wound is covered or dressed.
6. When bleeding cannot be controlled, the athlete must not be permitted to return to the event.

Officials / First Aid Officers

1. Officials / first aid officers must take precautions not to come into contact with body fluids, particularly blood or with soiled objects, even if the risk is low.
2. Care must be taken to avoid blood from the wounded athlete coming into contact with skin punctures or cuts, particularly on the fingers, or reaching the eyes or membranes of the nose or mouth.
3. When treating an injured athlete, always wear latex, disposable gloves in anticipation of body fluids, particularly blood from the nose, mouth or a wound. The gloves must be discarded after use.
4. Thoroughly wash hands with hot water and soap before and particularly after contact with the athlete being treated, even if gloves have been worn.
5. Wash any areas that have come into contact with body fluids.

Competition Areas

1. The practice of spitting must not be permitted.
2. All equipment and surfaces contaminated by blood must be treated as potentially infectious. Equipment and/or surfaces should be cleaned immediately if soiling or spills occur.

3. When cleaning up blood and body substances (e.g. saliva) –
 - a) gloves must be worn;
 - b) if the blood spill is large, confine and contain the spill;
 - c) remove the bulk of the blood and body substance with absorbent material, paper towels;
 - d) wipe the affected areas with disposable towels soaked in a 1:10 solution of bleach, 2% detergent, and then clean the area with water;
 - e) place soiled paper towels, gloves, compresses and dressings into a sealed plastic bag to be disposed of in a garbage disposal bin;
 - f) it is acceptable to wash soiled towels or material in a normal washing process.
4. When blood is spilled onto grass (turf absorbent surfaces), the blood should be first removed with some absorbent material and watered so that remaining blood sinks into the earth.
5. When blood spills on non-absorbent surfaces, e.g. asphalt, high jump mats etc. the blood should be removed as per 3 (d) above.
6. Any athletic equipment which has blood spills must be cleaned with disposable towel and a 1:10 solution of bleach water.

Education

1. There is an obligation upon Little Athletics NSW to provide suitable information on the risk factors and prevention strategies against the possible risk due to blood borne infectious diseases.
2. The safe handling of all blood spills must be brought to the attention of all Little Athletics parents and officials.